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# SKULL VALLEY-LAKESIDE SALT FLATS

## MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN

### SUMMARY and HIGHLIGHTS



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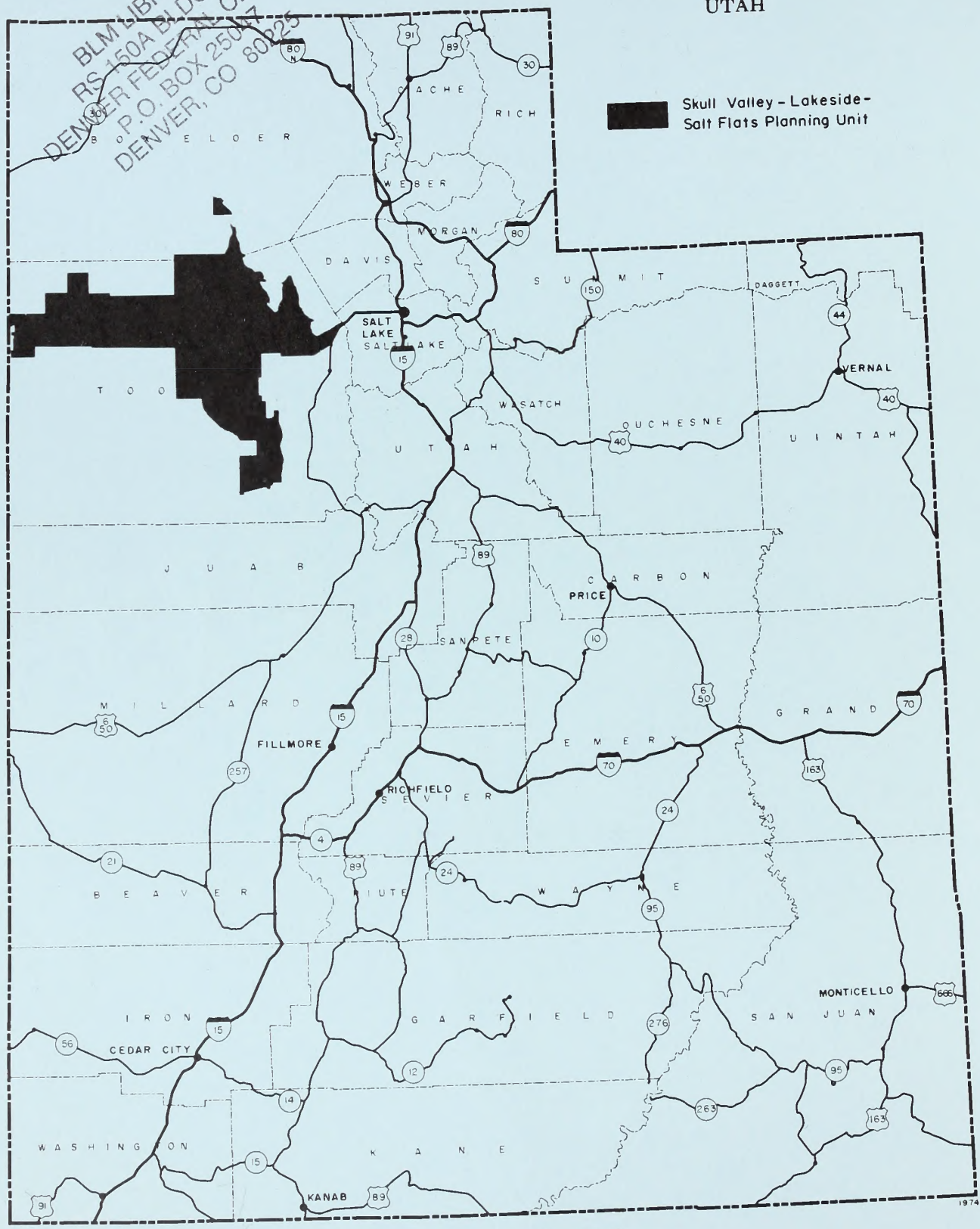




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## FORWARD

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The Bureau of Land Management is developing land use plans to help meet its management responsibilities on national resource lands (formerly called public lands) under its administration and help satisfy the needs of the using public. These plans are used as a framework for better decision making. The planning process on the national resource lands, is dynamic and continuous, and as new information is made available the Bureau will periodically review and up-date them.

This report is a summary of the major land use decisions made in the Skull Valley-Lakeside, and Salt Flats Management Framework Plan. The plan was prepared by BLM Resource Specialists in correlation with the public. Public participation played a major role in development of this plan. A specially invited group representing the various resource activities, met with Bureau Resource Specialists on several occasions to discuss alternative management proposals. General public meetings were held in Salt Lake City, Tooele, Dugway and Wendover to obtain information on how the public desires their lands to be managed. Public comment is continually sought so additional comments are welcomed at this time and in the future.

Detailed maps showing land status and decisions as they affect specific areas and sites are part of the data available in District office files. Specific information not covered in this summary, but available for public inspection includes activity plan priorities, detailed physical data, land tenure adjustment areas, development sites, etc. Also available is the detailed rationale for each decision contained in the plan. Our intent with

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this document is to provide a brief overview of decisions affecting future management of the national resource lands in the planning area. Please feel free to contact the District Office at any time for further and more detailed information.

Following the completion of the Management Framework Plan, activity or development plans will be prepared. These plans are very detailed and spell out just how projects will be constructed and resources managed.

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Skull Valley-Lakeside and Salt Flats Management Plan encompasses an area of 1,301,520 acres. As the name implies, most of the area is desert. Vegetation, soils and wildlife are typical of those found in the cold desert portions of the Great Basin.

Topography is characterized by north-south trending mountains separated by broad desert valleys. Elevation ranges from 4,200 feet to about 8,500 feet. Debris eroded from the mountains has been deposited in large alluvial fans along the sides of the mountains. Soils of the mountains and foothills areas are rocky and light to dark colored and range from loamy sand to silty loam in texture. These soils are fertile and support various stands of native vegetation. The lower portions of the valley often have saline and sodic soils. Texture is silty clay loam. Salinity and poor drainage make these soils relatively unproductive.

Vegetation varies considerable within the area depending upon climate and elevation. Valley bottoms lacking good drainage are often barren or covered with pickleweed, salt grass, and greasewood. As drainage improves and elevation increases, shadscale and Indian ricegrass become common; then sagebrush and cheatgrass; then juniper and bluebunch wheatgrass; and finally mahogany and Douglas fir on the north slopes. Numerous other species of vegetation are found intermixed with these broad categories.

In spite of the arid nature of the land, numerous wildlife species can be found. Mule deer and chukars are the most sought after game species, but jackrabbits are the most popular hunted species. Many people living along the Wasatch Front visit the area for hunting purposes. Non game species

such as eagles and hawks are becoming more important in our considerations because they add to and improve the recreational experience, and also function as an integral part of the total desert ecosystem.

Nearly all land within the planning unit is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The State of Utah is the third largest land administrator. They own four sections in each township. Figure 1 shows the major land owners in the area.

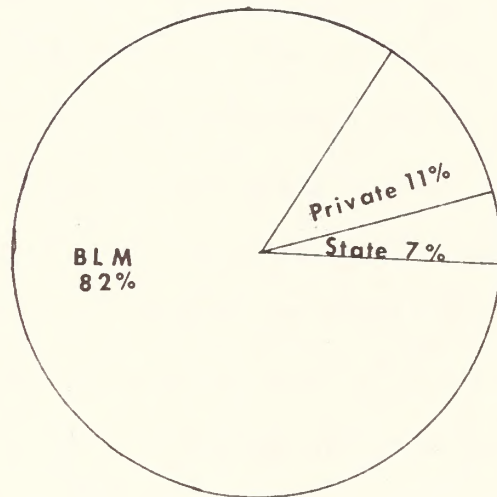


Figure 1, Status of Land Ownership

There are only a few people residing in the planning area. Wendover, Terra, and Skull Valley Indian Reservation are the only settlements. It is estimated that less than 1,000 people live in the area. The population is not expected to experience any increases within the next five years. After this time, slight increase may take place particularly near Wendover, assuming no major mineral discoveries are made or current mineral operations do not become residential.

National resource lands are very important economically to the residents in the area. Many people are engaged in the livestock industry and their farm operations depend upon public rangeland for about 1/3 of the forage

consumed. Personal income generated by NRL rangeland is not significant when compared with total County income. The most significant economic activity taking place on NRL is mining.

Demand for the resources in the planning area are rapidly increasing. Red meat demand will increase 2 percent annually. Fishing and hunting demands are increasing four percent annually, and other recreational activities are increasing about five percent annually. The outlook for mineral production is bright. This area is the major supplier of beryllium ore in the United States and uses for this metal are expected to increase.

The capability of this area to meet these demands in conjunction with the objective of protecting and improving the environment is the basis of the major land decisions outlined in the following sections.







## THE RESOURCES

### LANDS

#### OBJECTIVES:

Make land available to satisfy industrial, commercial and residential needs when adequate county planning and zoning is completed. Allow less than fee transactions when a need is expressed and when the proposed use will not duly conflict with other resource uses.

#### BASIS:

There is little private land in this planning area. If the communities of Wendover and Terra are to expand, it will have to be on public land. Industrial land use needs will be primarily for a solar evaporative pond. The major R/W corridor parallels I-80, which is almost entirely on public land from Timpie Point to Wendover. The R/W corridor where it crosses the salt flats is one of the few places where the flats can be crossed during the entire year.

#### MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

Provide for disposal of public lands for commercial development in accordance with county planning and zoning as demands indicate the need. Make the land available for industrial use when a demand exists. Locate all rights-of-way for utilities and power lines south of the I-80 corridor. All future rights-of-way to the National Lead Industries be located in the corridor along the west side of the existing road. Allow a motocross SLUP on Stansbury Island in Broad Canyon (in lieu of Tabby's Canyon where original application was).  
Allow exchange of lands under Section 8 of the TGA where the proposal for exchange is to the benefit of the Government.

# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan

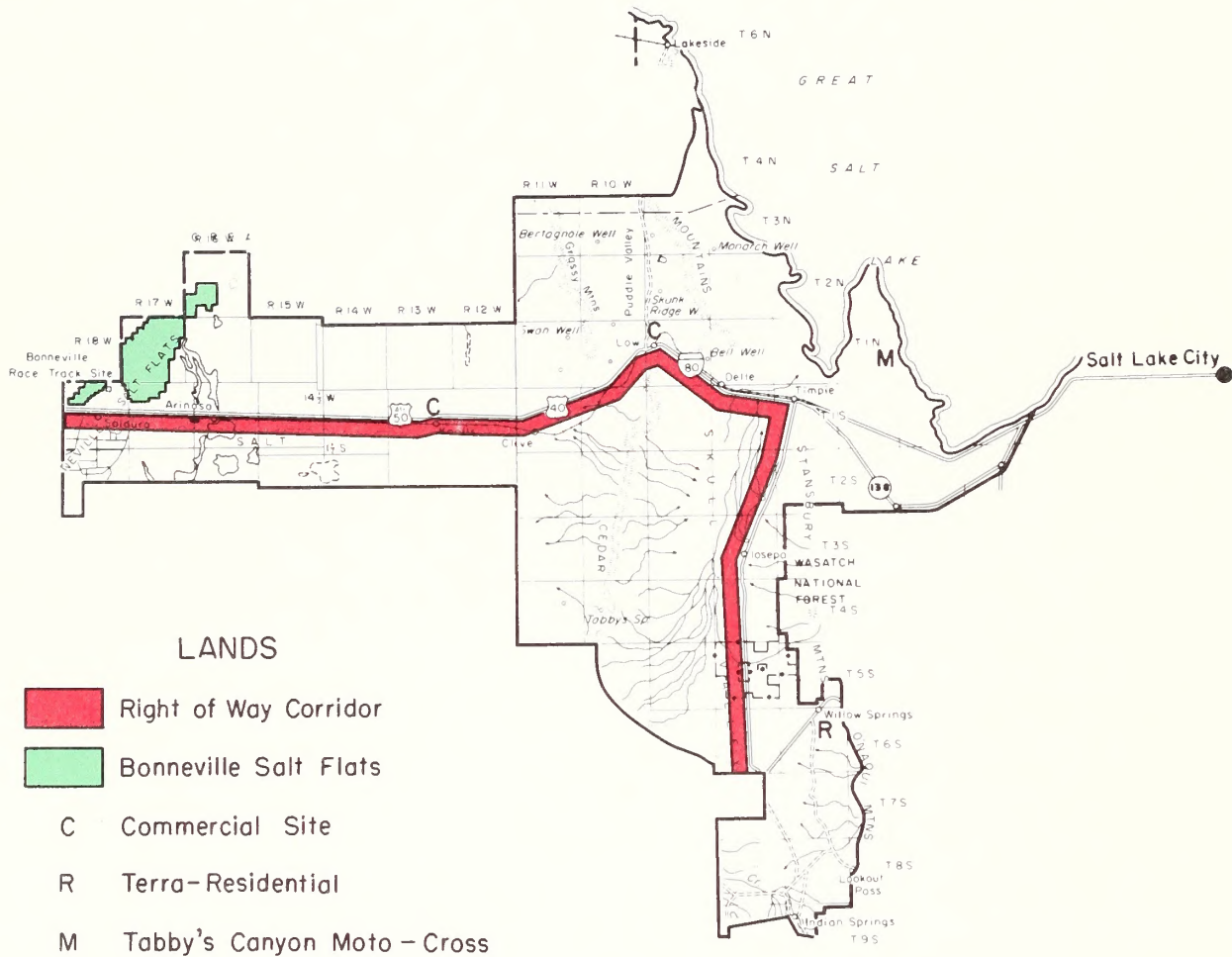


Figure # 2



## MINERALS

### OBJECTIVES:

Make available for disposal under applicable regulations to meet national, regional or local needs the following: salines, geothermal steam, soil and gas, sand and gravel, base and precious metals, dolomite, limestone, gypsite, silica, oolitic sand, building stone (quartzite), barite, and diatomaceous earth.

### BASIS:

Salines have a wide variety of uses and are in continuous demand. The most widely used and best known is salt, used for both the chemical industry and for a dietary supplement to man. The potash is an essential nutrient for plant growth and is most widely used in the fertilizer industry. Geothermal steam has the potential to provide a source of almost pollution-free electricity. Oil and Gas are our nation's two primary mineral fuels, supplying over 60% of our nation's energy needs. Sand and gravel will continue to be needed for maintenance of existing highways and other construction in the planning unit. The base and precious metals have an expected continued growth in the economy of the state and nation, and will generate an ever-increasing demand for these minerals. The domestic supply does not meet the present demand for zinc, lead, or silver at this time. The iron is a vital part of our ever-expanding industrialization and is a very necessary part of the steel industry. Tooele County is Utah's principal supplier of dolomite and limestone, supplying approximately 70% of Utah's annual demand. Gypsite is an impure form of gypsum used as a soil conditioner in the treatment of alkali soils. Industry requires

# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan

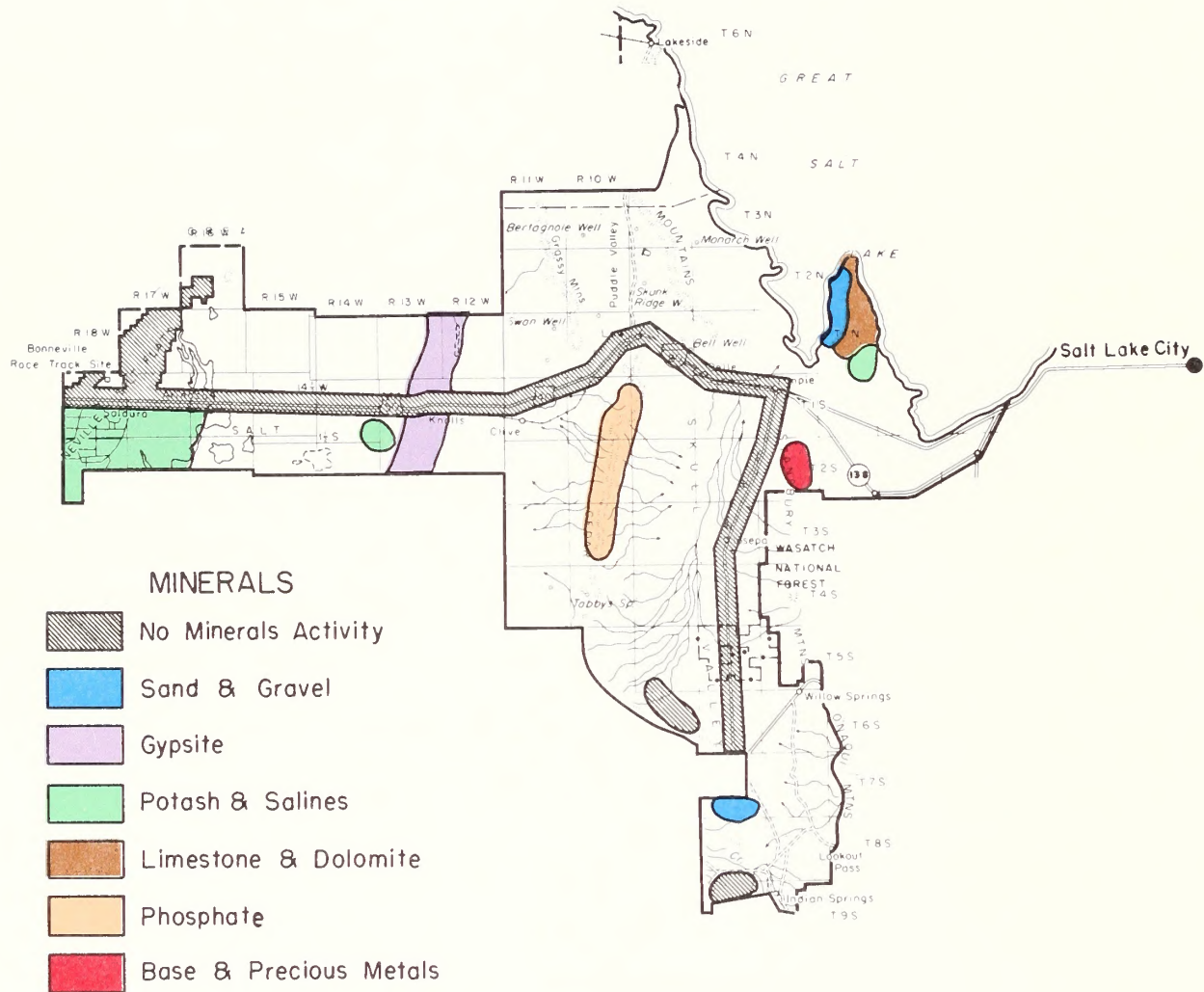


Figure #3



a large amount of silica as an alloying agent in iron, steel, aluminum and as a refractory material for foundry sands in the smelting industry. The high calcium content and amenable form of oolitic sand make it an ideal flux for both the ferrous and non-ferrous smelters in the central Salt Lake industrial valley.

#### MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

Issue prospecting permits and/or leases within the indicated saline areas, to that area lying east of the right-of-way corridors and to leave essential open space for antelope. Allow no new leases of salines in the vicinity of the Bonneville Raceway until the completion of a study to determine the effects of extraction of such salines. Allow geothermal leases under the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 with the following restrictions within the travel influence zone of I-80, the Skull Valley highway, and also near Horseshoe Springs. Restrictive stipulations will be added to leases in these areas to protect the natural settings and wildlife values. Allow continued oil and gas leasing with the following restrictions and stipulations: Restricted classification at Cedar Mountain, Stansbury Mountain, north end, Dell Ranch Salt Mountain, Great Salt Lake Shoreline, Great Salt Lake Desert.

2. No surface occupancy leasing allowed with no vertical drilling; (a) I-80 buffer, (b) White Rocks, (c) Simpson Springs (d) Stansbury Island. 3. No leasing areas: (a) Simpson Springs, (b) north tip of Stansbury Island, (c) Bonneville Speedway. 4. Open area; All areas not designated above are open for leasing.

All sand and gravel extraction as needed, open community pits in communities where the need arises. These pits to be established where the least amount of environmental degradation will take place. Provide

stipulations on all permits and leases for sand and gravel, provide for rehabilitation of all lands connected with such operations. Allow no gravel pits in the open within recreation buffer zones within the planning unit. Allow the extraction of gypsite, in areas listed as potential with the exception of the Knolls Recreation Area. This will be closed to gypsite extraction. Allow location and exploration for silicates in the Stansbury Island area, with the exception of Tabby's Canyon and Rock Canyon which will be closed because of the ORV activity. Allow disposition of oolitic sand in areas where available with the exception of Tabby's and Rock Canyons, which would be the typical proposed recreation area on Stansbury Island. Allow the continued location and extraction from potential areas for diatomaceous earth.



## TIMBER

### OBJECTIVE:

Maintain the existing woodland cover in the tree planning units concerned in order to maintain the present cover for wildlife protection, watershed protection, and aesthetics.

### BASIS:

URA Step 3 shows 136 thousand acres of Utah juniper, generally of small size and so scattered, that the entire area should be classified for protection. The demand for cedar posts will continue to be small, as there are no large areas in which potential posts are growing. There are no suitable areas for juniper control through chaining, as the livestock manipulation is capable of maintaining a suitable ground cover. Value of the juniper areas for aesthetic and recreation is greater than if the ground cover is removed for livestock forage.

### MANAGEMENT DECISION:

Maintain the existing juniper cover at its present condition with the following exception: Some areas capable of vegetative manipulation might be reseeded.

# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan

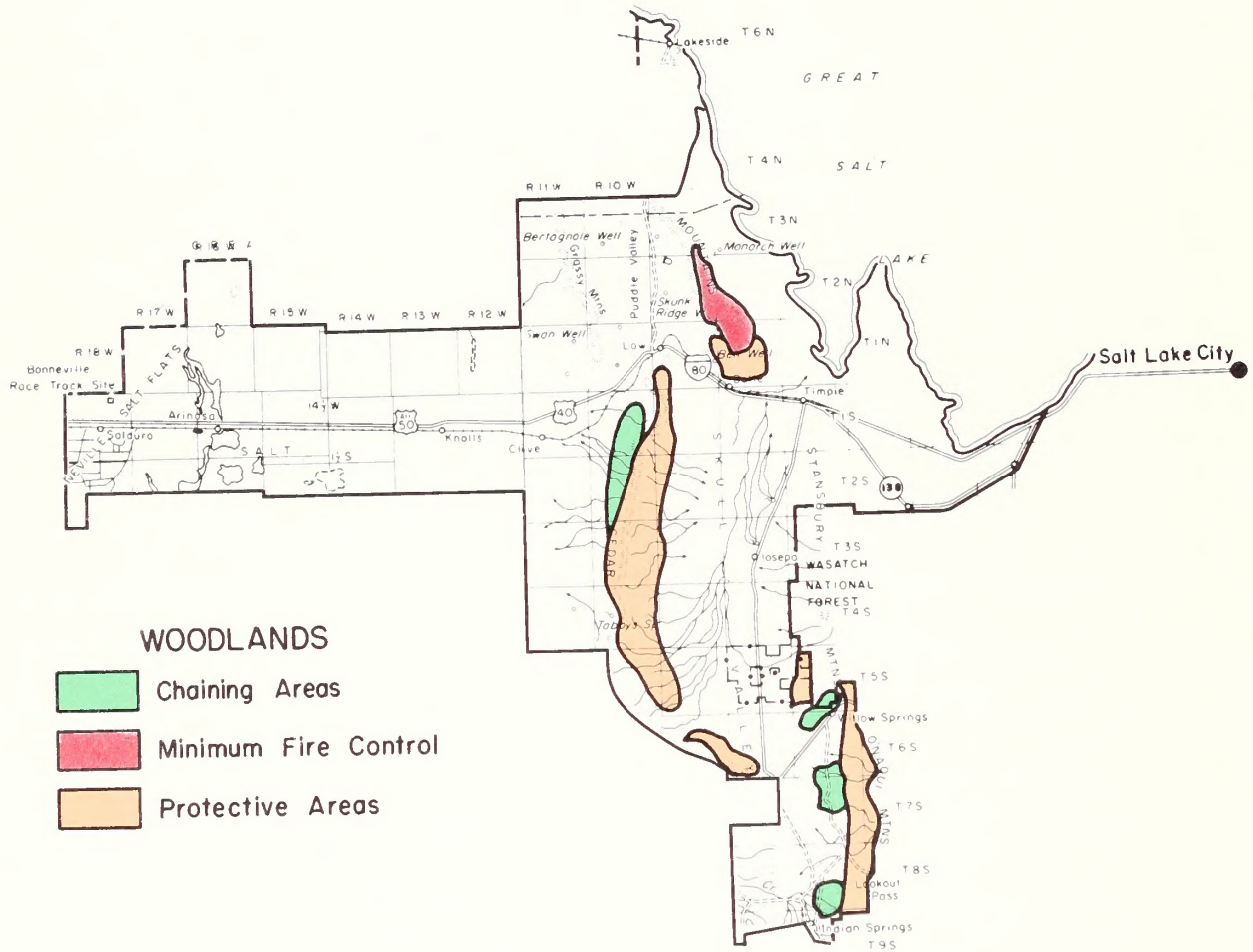


Figure # 4



# WILDLIFE

## OBJECTIVES:

Maintain Stansbury deer herd unit 12 in balance with the winter range potential. Maintain the quality of habitat throughout the habitat area, allow for a maximum population of raptors. Maintain a healthy and productive population of predators in balance with prey species.

Increase the quality of chukar habitat to allow for increased production.

Increase quality of sage grouse habitat. Develop waterfowl and warm water fisheries where applicable within the planning unit. Establish huntable antelope population in suitable habitat areas.

## BASIS:

This unit produces an annual harvest of between 1200 and 1400 deer per year, with an average success ratio of between 35 to 50 percent for approximately 3000 to 4000 hunters. Raptor population has a definite impact on gopher and possibly other rodent populations. The current emphasis on ecology and biological controls, and the significance of raptors controlling these species, cannot be discounted. Current restrictions on the use of toxicants should bring the predator populations closer to prey levels. This planning unit supports an abundant population of rodents and lagomorphs, which are the natural prey for the predators residing in this planning unit. Introduction of chukars into the area has resulted in a very popular game bird in this area. Over 20 percent of the hunting pressure and 24+percent of the harvest is from this planning unit. Much of the sage grouse range in this planning unit has been destroyed or altered. This should be changed through proper management of the other resources in order to

# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan

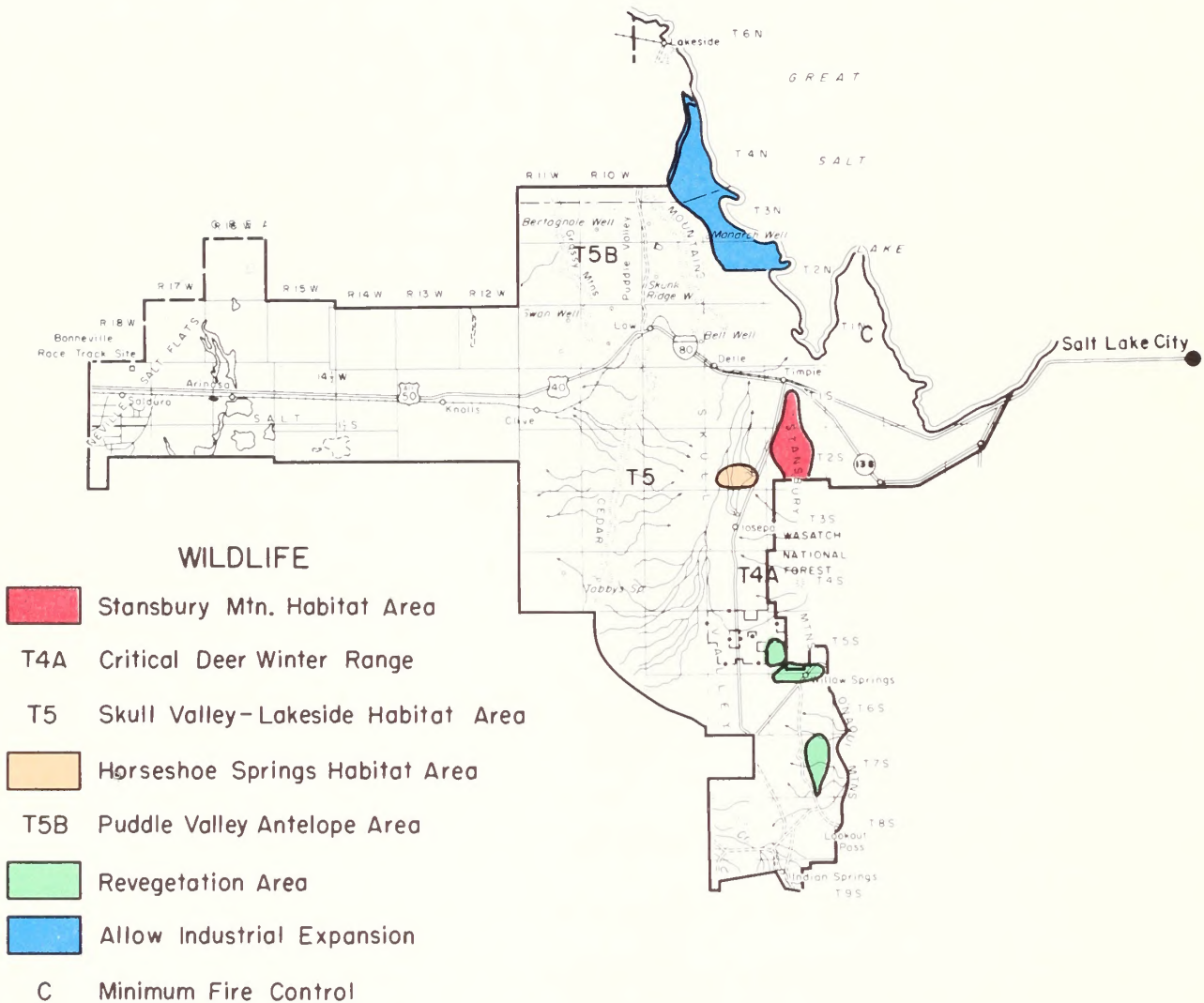


Figure #5



allow this native grouse species to make a comeback in what was once a highly populated sagegrouse area. Current demand for fishing, waterfowl hunting and other forms of watershed recreation is way in excess of existing resources. Most fishing and hunting areas in northern Utah are extremely crowded and the trend is increasing. Antelope have historically been in the Skull Valley-Lakeside Planning Units, and the aesthetics and other intrinsic values of a reintroduced herd in this area would more than offset the additional manpower for investigation and subsequent management.

#### MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

All artificial rehabilitation projects will contain suitable browse and forbs for winter deer use. Allow no treatment of public lands with insecticides, pesticides, or other toxic agents.

All proposed developments of natural resources will be coordinated with the DWR and staff specialists.

Allow existing cheat grass communities to remain in non-critical areas.

Design and place gallinaceous guzzlers in critical chukar habitat.

Restrict surface disturbances in sage grouse strutting areas during strutting and nesting season. (March-May)

Acquire water rights to assure proper development of Horseshoe Springs as a water fowl and warm water fishery.

Prepare an EAR on planned transplant, Sign agreement with DWR and all impacted private land owners abd Hill AFB, Close area to ORV use during kidding season after transplant.



# RECREATION

## OBJECTIVES:

Provide for dispersed recreation use throughout the entire planning unit. Provide a buffer around high recreation impact areas such as White Rocks and other areas. Provide for recreation features to facilitate increasing recreation demands. Manage the planning unit to maintain the endless space value and create interest by indentifying the uniqueness of the native vegetation.

## BASIS:

The present recreation uses are campers, bike riders seeking the solitude of undeveloped areas, the weekend camper and hiker, the rock-hounder, the person who is interested only in the Salt Flats, those who are interested in looking at the wild horses on Cedar Mountain. More than two million vehicles with occupants pass through the center of the Salt Flats on I-80 annually.

## MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

Manage the area to protect the open space values and to provide dispersed recreation use. Where appropriate, provide areas for ORV use such as Knolls and the Cedar Mountains north of Hastings Pass. These two areas are specifically designated as ORV areas (Knolls is open to all ORV use and the Hastings Pass area for special events by organized ORV groups). Where the Pony Express crosses the unit, construct overnight and picnic facilities at the old station (Simpson Springs). Identify and mark the pioneer trails that cross thought the planning units.

Provide buffer zones for the proposed Utah State Racing Museum, Danger Cave Archeological site and for the Simpson Springs recreation complex. Provide Lone Rock or Skull Rock Lichen area with interpretive signs and a protective fence around the area to protect the lichens.

Identify the unique desert marshlands at Horseshoe Springs with their



# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan

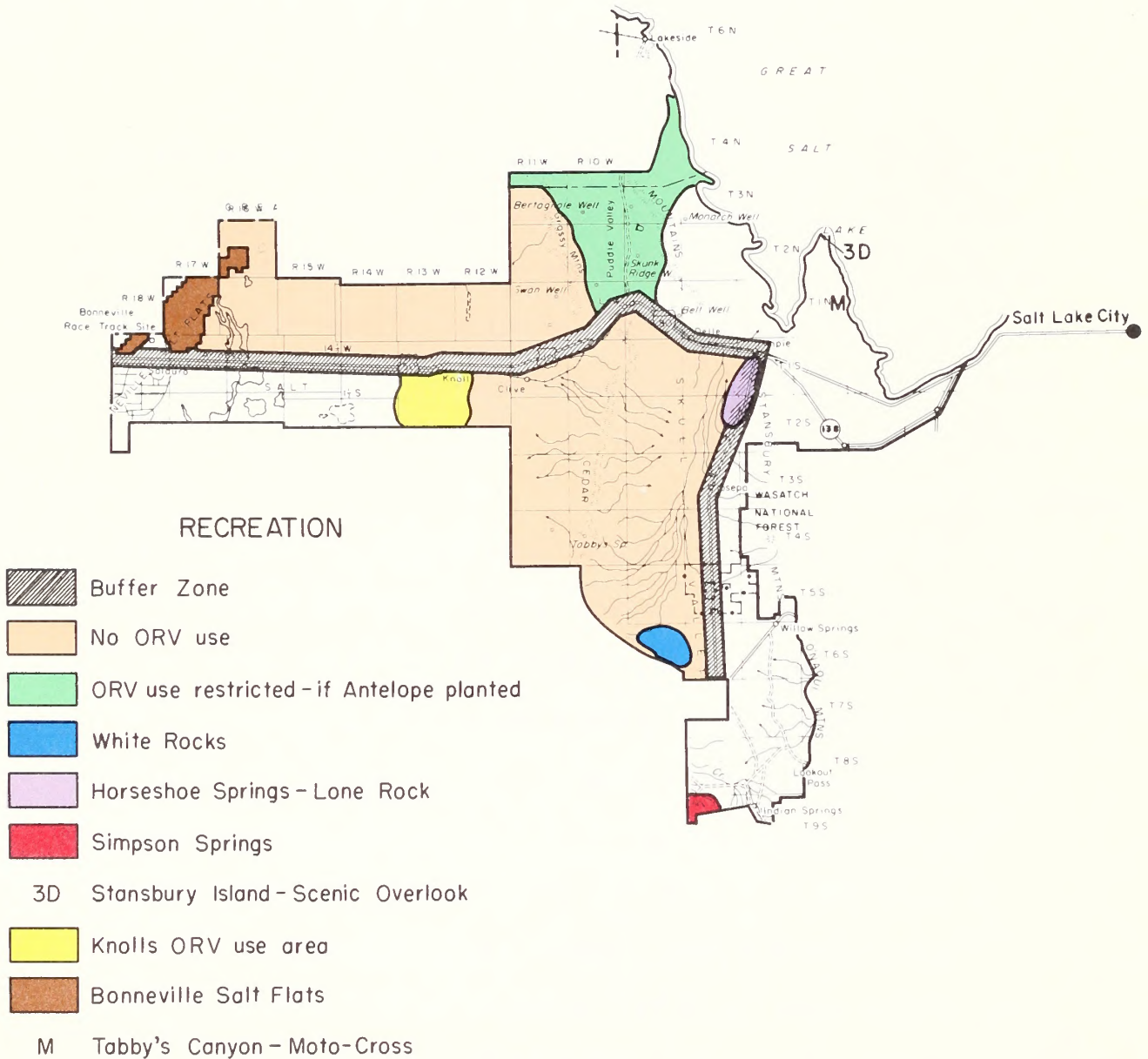


Figure # 6

accompanying ecological significance. Provide for no further encroachment of this area by minerals or related activities.

Provide an interpretive overlook and recreation complex for travelers crossing the salt flats on I-80.



# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan

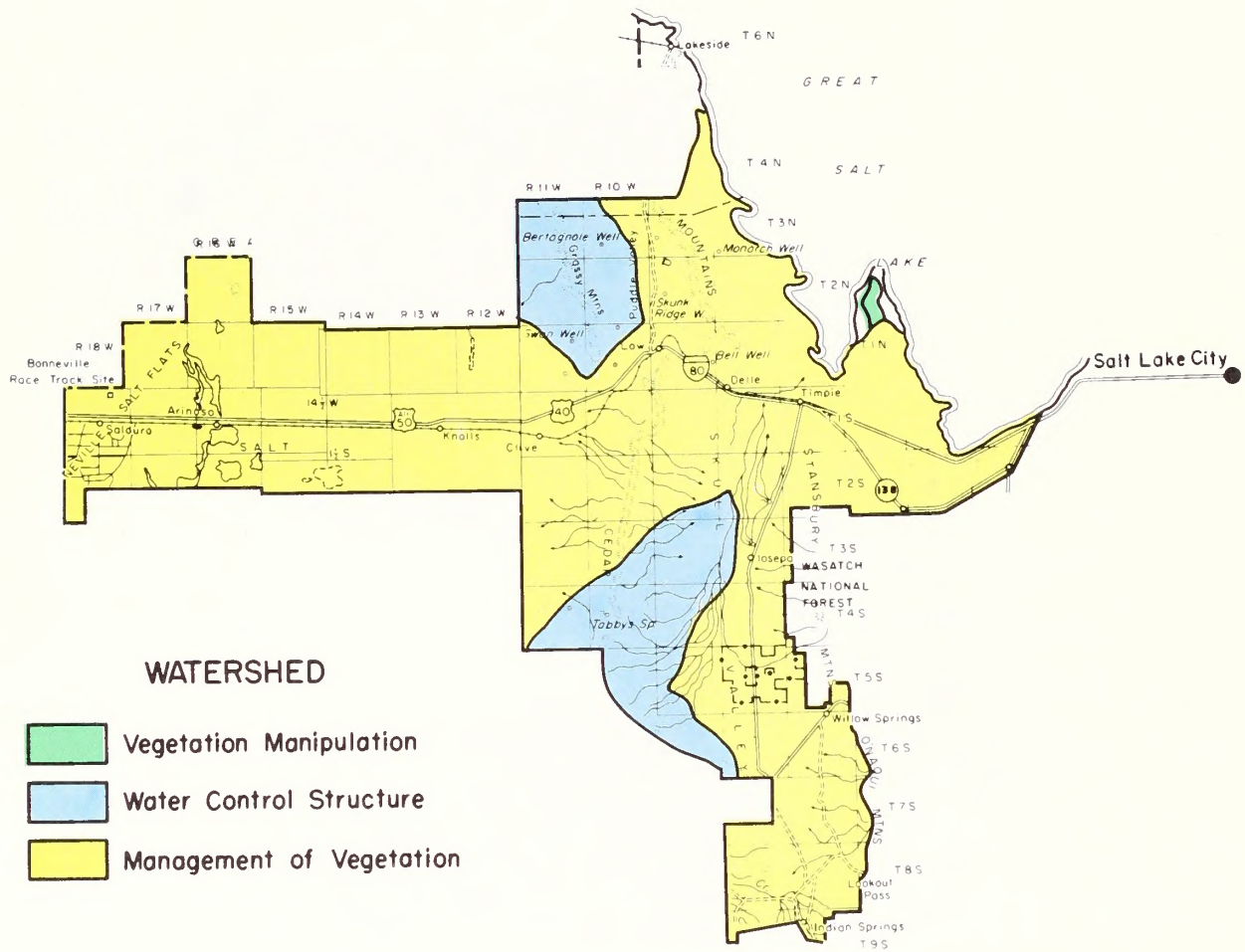


Figure #7



## WATERSHED

### OBJECTIVE:

Improve the closed basin watersheds to a stable condition, to reduce soil erosion and eliminate onsite damage within the closed basin.

### BASIS:

The watersheds in the Skull Valley-Lakeside-Salt Flats Planning Unit vary from critical to stable in present conditions. Primary vegetative cover can be managed to improve watershed conditions. As all watersheds in this planning unit are closed basins within the Great Basin, there is no measurable downstream damage. Upstream damages have occurred from past abuses from livestock, wildlife and wild horses.

### MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

Appropriate water control structures will be located throughout the area where feasible, utilizing management of livestock to achieve a stable watershed condition in this zone. Some water control structures may be necessary in the future if natural vegetation does not take place in all instances. Treat by appropriate mechanical means where soil and moisture conditions are favorable and the potential exists to increase vegetative cover and stabilize existing conditions.

This mechanical treatment will not be allowed until after the development of a suitable allotment management plan that has been in effect for one full season. Manage the Salt Flats watershed to maintain the recreational aspects of the Salt Flats. There will be no new leasing of the brine allowed until after the trend is determined on the deterioration of brine extraction in the raceway.







## LIVESTOCK FORAGE

### OBJECTIVE:

Increased livestock forage production to reach class 1 demand.

### BASIS:

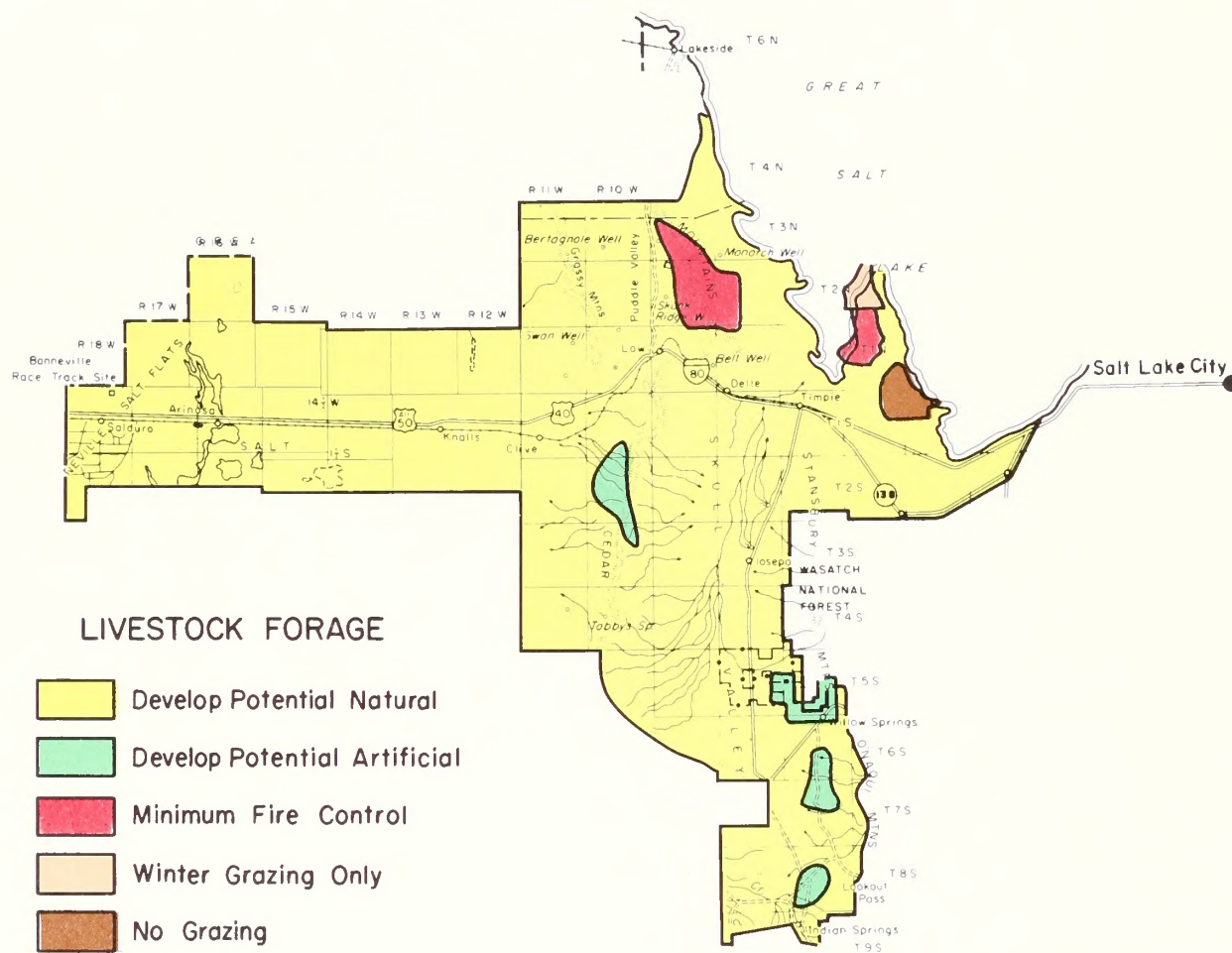
The Skull Valley-Lakeside - Salt Flats Planning Unit is not a productive one, and only a few areas are potentially capable of being seeded. Most of the stockment operating are marginal and any additional AUM's that can be provided through management will help to stabilize their livelihood. Approximately 80 percent of the total land area of the Planning Units are national resource lands, therefore the stockmen are highly dependent upon federal lands for their livelihoods.

### MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

Develop the range potential to the ultimate by natural means. such as livestock manipulation. Develop management systems that will protect and enhance the key species, blue bunch wheatgrass. In areas that are marginal between blue bunch wheat grass and cheat grass, manage ranges for development of the blue bunch wheat grass. Develop artificial potential to their fullest. Reseed, convert sage and juniper to grass. This to be done only after establishment of an approved allotment management plan that has gone through one whole grazing cycle to show that this is necessary.



# Skull Valley - Lakeside Salt Flats Management Framework Plan



**Figure # 8**

## WILD HORSES

### OBJECTIVES:

To provide for the protection and management of a healthy, thriving herd of wild horses on the Cedar Mountain Wild Horse Protection Area. Provide an opportunity for the public to observe wild horses in their natural habitat.

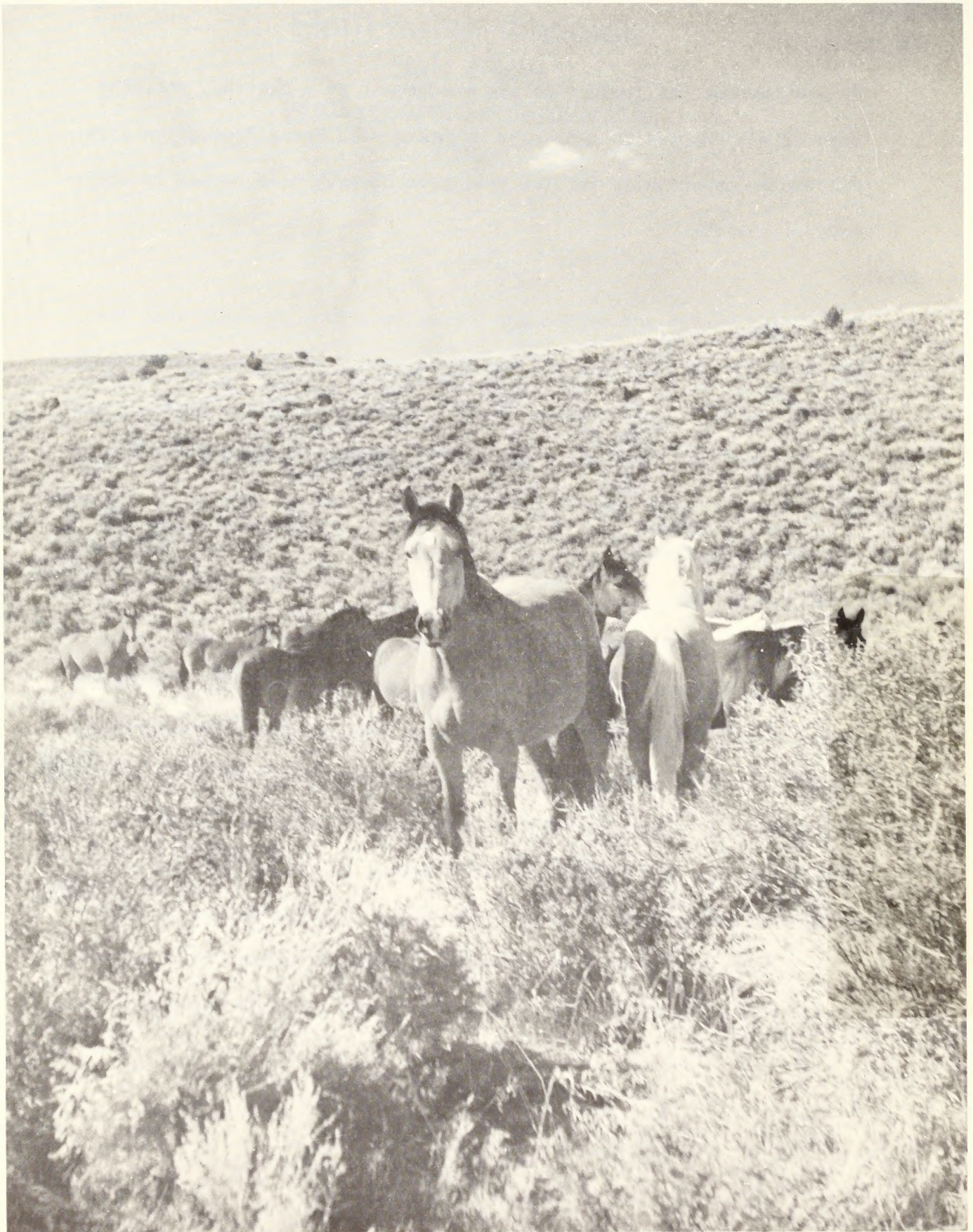
### BASIS:

Public law 92-195 and subsequent executive action provides that the BLM will manage and protect wild, free-roaming horses on public lands. Wild horses are considered to be an integral part of the historic and cultural background of the western United States. The opportunity to observe or be aware of wild horses in their natural habitat can be a rewarding experience.

### MANAGEMENT DECISIONS:

Restrict the wild horse area to ORV use. Develop and improve water sources throughout the protection area, acquire all private lands and water within the protection area, reject proposals for disposition of natural resource lands within the area. Check saddle horse use in the protection area, February through May. Provide for studies to determine the carrying capacity of wild horses in the protection area. Conduct a withdrawal review with the Dugway Proving Ground to determine a need to continue the military withdrawal in the south portion of the Cedar Mountains, where the wild horses range on the Dugway side.







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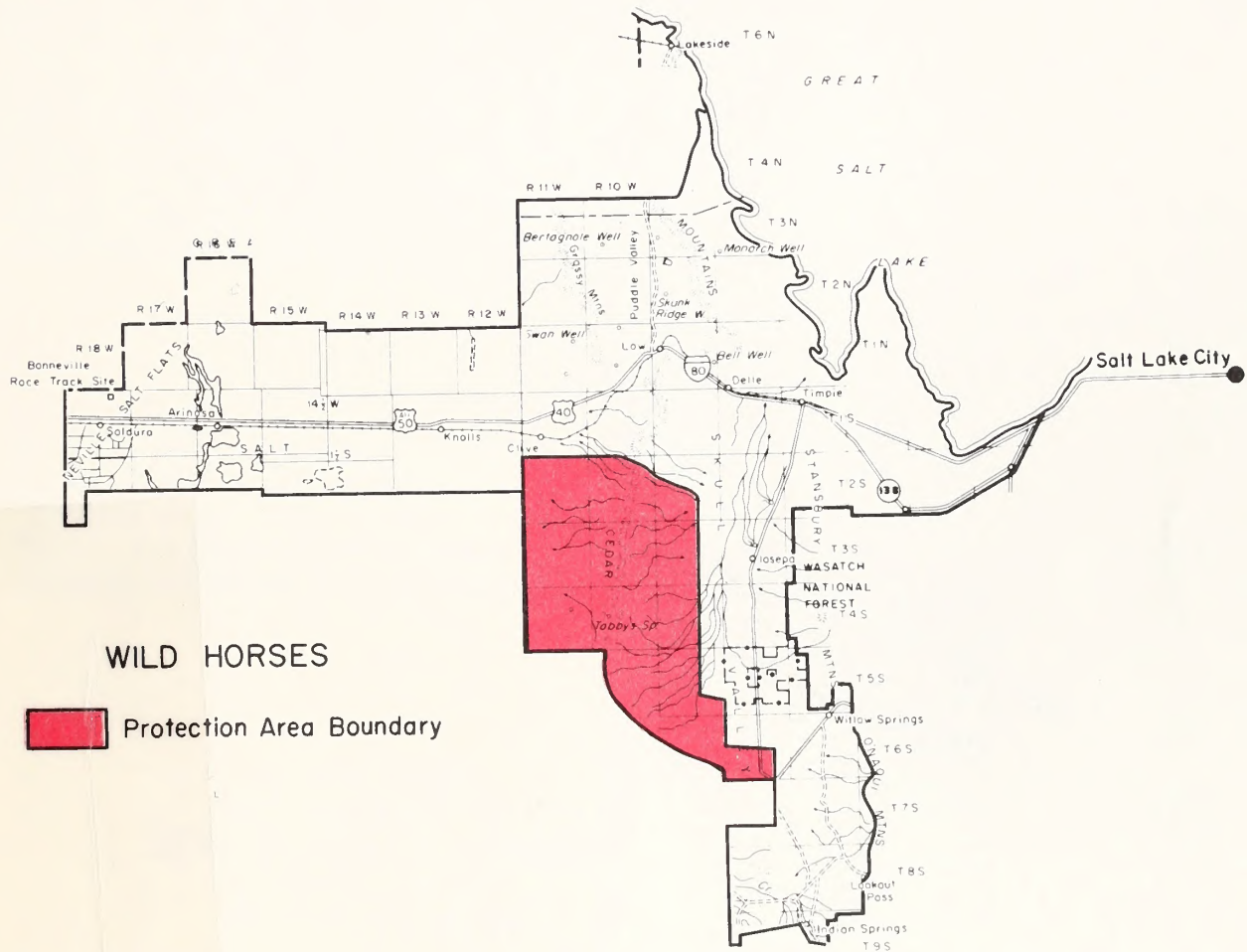


Figure # 9

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